

## The Sunday School

## LESSON III—JANUARY 16

BY THE EDITOR

## Beginning of the Ministry of Jesus—Matt. 4: 17-25

GOLDEN TEXT.—The people which sat in darkness saw great light. Matt. 4: 16.

LESSON THOUGHT.—God is still calling men to repentance, to forsake sin, and to the higher duties of the kingdom of God.

## Home Readings

Testimony of John, John 3: 23-36.

Jesus in Galilee, Matt. 4: 12-25.

Rejected at Nazareth, Lk. 4: 14-30.

Miracles at Capernaum, Lk. 4: 31-44.

Samuel Called, I Sam. 3: 1-14.

Saul Called, Acts 9: 2-16.

All Fulness in Christ, Col. 1: 9-20.

## Introductory Notes

Up to this time Jesus' method of conveying truth was principally by conversation, such as his interview with Nicodemus and the woman of Samaria. Now he adopts the method of public preaching. The burden of his preaching that men should repent, and the reason assigned as to why men should repent was that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. It was at hand in the person of Jesus. The kingdom of heaven is the rule of God in the heart, in the church and in the world. Without repentance it was impossible to enter the kingdom of God. We can not even see the kingdom without the new birth. We may get into the church without true repentance, but we can never deceive God, and get into the higher kingdom without true repentance and faith in God.

## Meaning of the Text

17. *That time.* After the imprisonment of John. Jesus was now in Galilee, at Capernaum, not at Nazareth. *Began to preach.* To proclaim as a herald. Before this his preaching was more in the form of conversations, as with Nicodemus and the woman at the well. *Repent.* Not only sorrow or regret for sin, but change of heart, life and conduct. *Kingdom of heaven.* Matthew alone uses this expression, employing it thirty-three times. The kingdom of heaven does not mean heaven, but the rule of God in the hearts of men. This kingdom was now at hand.

18. *Sea of Galilee.* On the Jordan river, which flows thro it. The water is clear and wholesome and abounds in fish. It is 12¾ miles long; 7¼ miles wide, and its greatest depths is 160 feet. In the days of Christ its shores were lined with towns and a swarming population. *Two brethren.* Their first call is recorded in John 1: 30-43. *Fishers.* At this time the fisheries of the sea of Galilee were very productive and many people found occupation in this business. A fishing boat is scarcely ever seen on the lake now.

19, 20. *Follow me.* They were now to leave their secular occupation and attach

themselves to him, to become his disciples, learners and helpers in the great harvest field. *Fishers of men.* A striking parable in a single verse, expanded in Matt. 13: 47-50. The sea is the world; men's souls are the fish; the net is the gospel. *Straightway.* They promptly obeyed. They knew Jesus as they had been with him before. Luke 5: 1-11.

21, 22. *James—John.* Partners of Peter and Andrew. Luke 5: 10. Their mother's name was Salome who afterwards became one of Christ's personal followers. *Mending—nets.* After the night of fruitless fishing. *Left the ship.* This too was prompt obedience. They left their father also, thus sacrificing all worldly interests for Christ. Matt. 10: 37.

23. *About all Galilee.* This was Christ's first preaching tour in Galilee. The district was densely populated, having two or three millions of people. Jesus gathered most of his followers from this district. They were less under priestly influence than those who lived in Judea. *Synagogues.* They were simply meeting houses, like our modern churches. There were 450 of them in Jerusalem alone. *Preaching.* Luke 4: 17-20 gives an account of the manner of preaching in a synagogue, and also of the form of the service. *Healing.* Mark 1: 21-35 gives a graphic description of one of Christ's days.

24, 25. *Fame.* The report of his work. *All Syria.* Denotes the great excitement produced by our Lord's miracles. *Sick people.* The news spread and friends brought their sick to him. He healed all manner of diseases. None were too difficult for him as is shown by those mentioned in this verse. *Decapolis.* Meaning ten cities. The region lay east and south of the sea of Galilee. The names of the ten cities are variously given. Verse 25 shows how popular Jesus had now become.

## The Lesson Applied

1. *Repent.*—This was the opening word of Christ's ministry. He began to preach by calling people to repentance. This too, was the way John the Baptist introduced and continued his ministry. It was one continual call to repentance. The world has not yet outgrown the need of repentance, and the gospel preacher of the day calls people to repentance as the Master did of old. As long as the world continues to sin, so long there will be need for this call to repentance. It means more than a sigh or regret for a bad past, more than a few tears over a blotted record. It means a firm resolve to turn around and leave that bad record, and a ceasing from making those blots on the record. It is the beginning to life fair, true and clean.

2. *They Were Fishers.* There is where Christ gets his people to fill important places. Not among idlers, those who are spending their time doing nothing, loafing, whittling up store boxes. He takes them from among the busy men and women, those who have proven themselves faithful in the ordinary duties of life. If you expect promotion, be

## RECEIPTS

Mission Fund in last report,	\$217.54
Remittance from delinquent societies,	11.00
“ for six months ending	
March 31, 1898,	42.03
Cash and proceeds from sale's table,	26.10
Interest on money loaned,	77.63

Total, \$374.30

## EXPENDITURES

Paid to Washington Mission,	\$60.00
“ for printing, postage, etc.,	2.12
“ W. C. Perry,	47.20
Total,	109.32

Theological fund, May, 15, '97,	\$21.70
Remittance from delinquent societies,	14.00
Theological pledges,	28.00
Cash and proceeds from sale's table,	20.00
Remittance this fall,	27.48

Total, \$111.18

Superannuated fund, May 15, '97	\$21.81
Remittance from delinquent societies,	1.15
Remittance this fall,	3.14

Total, \$26.10

Orphan's Endowment fund, May 15, '97,	\$119.40
Interest,	5.97

Total, \$125.37

Mission fund in treasury, Dec. 10, '97,	\$264.98
Theological fund in treasury, Dec. 10, '97,	111.18
Superannuated Minister's fund in treasury, Dec. 10, '97,	26.10
Orphan's Endowment fund in treasury, Dec. 10, '97,	125.37

Total, \$527.63

Fall remittances received by Mrs. Sarah Keim.

	Mission Fund.	Theological Fund.	Superannuated Fund.
Marcus, Iowa,	1.90		1.25
Dunlaps, Ind.,	1.20		
Fairview, “	5.00		
Enon church, Iowa,	1.10		1.10
Winchester, Ohio,		2.20	
Total,	9.20	2.20	2.35

Total received by Mrs. Keim,	\$13.75
Other receipts,	527.63

Total, \$541.38

MRS. D. L. SHAVER, Treasurer.

Many Christians are not getting great gains for themselves or for the Master, because they are fishing in shallow waters. “Launch out into the deep!” is the Lord's ringing command.